Number 15 (May - August 2015)

# NM-BULLETIN

NATIONAL MUSEUM New Delhi

# Welcome



The summer months at National Museum were filled with activity, learning and engagement. The month May began with the Children's workshops, Playtime at National Museum 2015, coupled with a special interactive and experiential exhibition titled ELEMENTS which was extremely popular with them.

The museum had a busy schedule with a packed schedule of Special Exhibitions. The Exhibition season began with the 'Art of Calligraphy and Beyond' which comprised of priceless decorative art objects that were drawn from the reserve collection of National Museum. Some of these objects had never been exhibited before. Senior Curator, Dr. Anamika Pathak worked closely with Zahid Ali Ansari, Assistant Curator to curate this Exhibition. This collaboration between an experienced and a young colleague has been symbolic of transfer of knowledge and responsibility which is a very good sign for the Museum. The Exhibition was designed in-house by a young artist and designer, Ms. Priya and was much appreciated.

Other Exhibitions organized at the Museum included the one object exhibition from Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya, Bhopal titled 'Poubi Lai- the Story of the Giant Python' and 'Cosmology to Cartography – A cultural journey of Indian Maps', both of which were extremely popular. Each Exhibition was coupled with interesting educational programmes and activities. The Museum lent its popular exhibition 'Ramakatha in Indian Miniatures' to the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra in May 2015 which is also being sent to the Art Gallery, Auckland, New Zealand.

21 June 2015 was celebrated as International Day of Yoga and on this occasion the Museum lent objects from its collection for an exhibition organized at Lalit Kala Akademi titled 'Yoga in Indian Art' which was a great success. Other programmes were also organized on the day including a session on Yoga with NM staff members and walks in the gallery for children on Yoga in Indian Art. A special T-shirt featuring the Yogic figure on a seal from Indus Civilization was also launched on this day. A special lecture was organised on this occassion and also a film 'History of Yoga- The Path of My Ancestors' was screened in the auditorium.

National Museum brought out many interesting publications in the span of 4 months including the catalogues for 'Cosmology and Cartography', 'Raghogarh Paintings' and a Hindi translation of 'Man in Paleolithic Age'.

A number of Curator walks, workshops and lectures were held at the Museum which were well received by the audience and visitors. Our social media presence has also shot up in these months with all the events being updated online and talked about by a number of followers and fans. With the activities and programme the museum wishes to engage with our regular audience in a better way and attract more audience.

Sanjiv Mittal
Director General, National Museum

# Exhibitions

## Art of Calligraphy and Beyond

An exhibition titled *Art of Calligraphy and Beyond: Arabic-Persian Inscriptions on Decorative Arts objects* was on display from 15th May till 12th July 2015 in Special Exhibition Hall-I.

Many of the objects in this exhibition were part of the reserve collection of the museum and were put on display for the public for the very first time. This initiative is a popular way to rotate the collection in the museum that allows the visitors to appreciate objects which they might not be able to see otherwise.

The exhibition had 56 utilitarian artefacts all bearing inscriptions artistically blended with various motifs and these objects were of different material such as metal, wood, textiles and semi precious stones. Different forms of surface ornamentations, decorated by various crafting techniques such as *koftagiri,bidri*, niello, engraving, writing, printing and embroidering was highlight in these exhibits.

A number of activities including Curator's Walk by Dr. Naseem Akhtar, curator walks by the curators, Dr. Anamika Pathak and Zahid Ali Ansari and workshops were organised around the exhibition.

Ring
Carnelian set in silver frame
Inscribed with Ayat-al-kursi (the Throne Verse).
19th century CE

# Exhibitions

## Poubi Lai - The Story of a Giant Python

National Museum collaborated with IGRMS, Bhopal to organize a one object exhibitio titled *Poubi Lai – The Story of a Giant Python*. The exhibition was curated by IGRMS and showcased a 22 feet long sculpture of Poubi Lai in wood accompanied by 30 paintings depicting mythical stories around this ritual object from Manipur. The exhibition opened on Tuesday, 21st July 2015.

The story of Poubi Lai is an important lore of the Meitei people of Manipur and this mighty creature is believed to have lived in the core of Loktak Lake. The lore expresses spiritual prowess of this mythical being whose anger grieved the Moirang kingdom beyond their control. The lore is preserved generation after generations through oral tradition.

It was for the first time in 2003 that one of the successors of the royal guild crafted a life size crawling posture of Poubi Lai on wood and his creation had drawn attention of the people to revisit to the glorious world of a great Python lore of Manipur. The exhibition was well recieved at National Museum and has then travelled to Indian Museum, Kolkata.

Additional Secretary, Sh. K K Mittal and Sh. Sanjiv Mittal, DG, NM inaugurating the exhibition titled 'Poubi Lai: The Story of a Giant Python

# Exhibitions

The inauguration and release of catalogue of the exhibition Rama-Katha in Indian Miniatures in National Gallery of Australia, Canberra

## Rama-Katha in Indian Miniatures

'The Story of Rama in Indian Miniatures' from National Museum, New Delhi made their journey to the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, Australia from 22nd May till 23rd August 2015. It was on display at Orde Poynton Gallery, depicting Ramayana, which is one of the world's great epics. Ramayana is ubiquitous in Indian life and culture as popular entertainment and moral guidance. This exhibition of 101 paintings, each illustrating a key moment from the narrative marked an important collaboration between these two premier national institutions. Created between the 17th and 19th centuries from across India, the paintings not only present the fantastic story of the Ramayana but also the diversity of regional painting styles that developed over time.

A catalogue was also produced for the exhibition.

## Yoga Exhibition

Sangeet Natak Akademi organized an exhibition in the Lalit Kala Academy galleries titled *Yoga Chakra: Tradition and Modernity* from June 21 to June 27, 2015.

National Museum lent 41 objects from its collection for this exhibition. It was organized as part of the first International Day of Yoga, celebrated on 21 June 2015.

Performances by various artists on the inauguration

The exhibition was curated by Smt. Shushma K. Bahl, and Ms. Archana B. Sapra, art critics and authors.

The exhibition featured about 350 masterpieces of art on Yoga in varied mediums. Some works represented the classical creative agencies of India going back to over 5000 years, and some were contemporary creations made specifically for the project by emerging young artists.

Gallery view of the exhibition

# Exhibitions



## Elements

A large section of NM's visitor group comprises students and NM regularly conducts programmes for all, facilitating productive learning and complete museum experience. National Museum periodically conceptualizes and organizes temporary exhibitions around various themes which caters to all public.

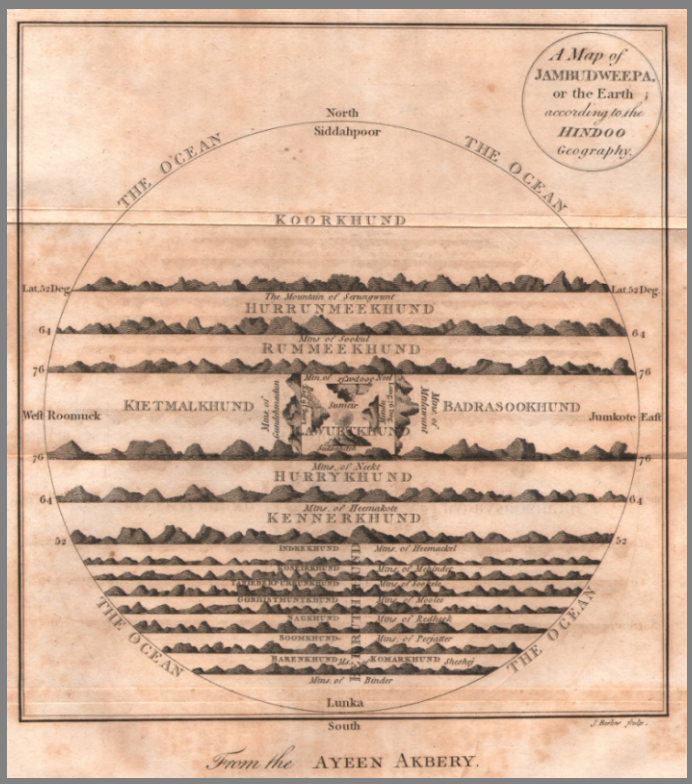
The exhibition, *Elements* was developed for children of ages 6-12. The segments in the exhibition were therefore very age specific. Through *ELEMENTS* children returned to a world of wonder, in all of its senses. Here, children were left to their own as parents and adults weren't allowed to accompany.

The exhibition *Elements* was an experiential, interactive art & theatre exhibition for children which engaged them by stimulating their senses. In today's technology dominated world sensorial experiences are a rare luxury for children - their tactile world is limited, their lives are structured, and spent mostly in enclosed spaces. They are always being told or instructed what to do, even when they play games on electronic gadgets. On the contrary, the exhibition elements used no text panels or labels to direct children as visitors to experience the space or objects in an intended approach. It rather acted a as a medium to provide young museum audiences a pleasurable simulative learning environment.

The exhibition was part of Playtime at National Museum 2015, an annual summer programme for children between 7 to 17 years. The exhibition was experienced by children from 10 July 2015 to 5 May 2015.

Children experiencing the exhibition

# Exhibitions




Map of Jambudvipa (Earth) according to the Hindoo geography. London, Early 19th century. Copper engraving

## Cosmology to Cartography

National Museum organized a temporary exhibition called "Cosmology to Cartography: A Cultural Journey of Indian Maps" in collaboration with Kalakriti Archives, Hyderabad. It was organized from 11th August to 11th October, 2015 and included a display of over 70 vintage maps from the collection of Kalakriti Archives, headed by Mr. Prshant Lahoti. The exhibition was curated by Dr. Vivek Nanda and Dr. Alex Johnson, and designed by Mr. Siddhartha Chatterjee from Seechange, Bangalore.

It showcased monumental original paintings of religious symbolism from the 15th to 19th centuries juxtaposed with some earliest historical maps of India. Curator led gallery walks as well as educational programs for young audiences were organized throughout the duration of the exhibition. The 19th National Museum Lecture was delivered by the curators, Dr. Vivek Nanda and Dr. Alexander Johnson, who spoke on the art of Cosmology and Cartography in the context of the Indian subcontinent.

# Workshops

Young Archaeologist workshop

Palaeolithic Tool-Making workshop

Replica Making workshop

## Playtime at National Museum 2015

National Museum has been organizing various learning oriented activities during the summer holidays of school children. A comprehensive summer programme *Playtime at National Museum* was conceptualized in 2014 with the aim of engaging children in programmes covering different topics and by connecting museum collection or objects with crafts, arts, language and various performing arts.

In 2015, summer holidays began from the second week of May and ended by first week of July, therefore *Playtime at NM 2015* commenced on 17th May and ended on 28th June 2015.

Workshops during Playtime were facilitated by experts from art and culture sector along with National Museum staff, which included Dr. Anamika Pathak, Anju Sachdeva, Sanjeeb Singh, Joyoti Roy, Yogesh Mallinathpur, Rige Shiba, Namita Mallik, Rajalakshmi Karakulam, Shubhasree Purkayastha, Indira Vats, Ruchira Verma, Khatibur Rahman, Shubha Banerjee and Sushmit Sharma.

A team of enthusiastic Playtime Volunteers helped in running all the workshops smoothly.

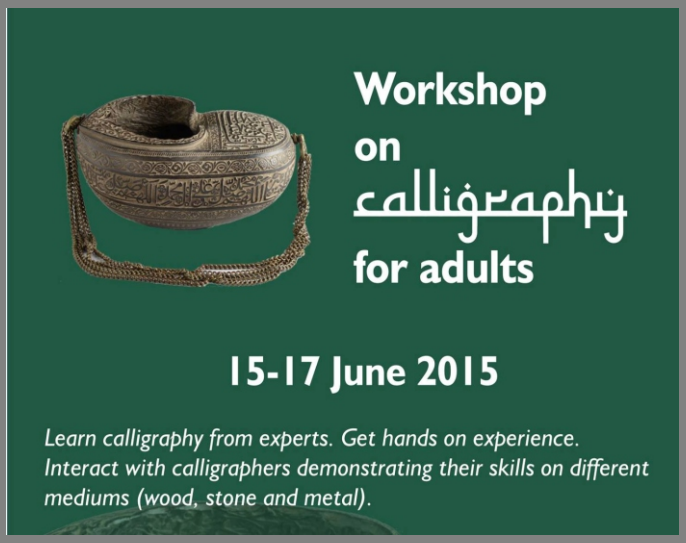
Team of Playtime Volunteers

# Workshops



## Art of Calligraphy Workshop

Department of Decorative Arts of National Museum organised a temporary exhibition on "The Art of Calligraphy & Beyond" from 15th May to 20th July 2015, under which two workshops were conducted.
National Award winning experts demonstrated their skills and helped participants to try their hand at various calligraphy crafts.
These workshops were conducted in two batches; one for secondary level students (26 in number) from 29th to 31st May 2015 and another for adults (30 in number) from 15th to 17th June 2015. Three expert calligraphers Irshad Hussain Farooqi from Delhi for wood work, Majid Ahmed Mir from Srinagar for textile and Mohd. Aslam Kasmi also from Delhi for stone calligraphy. The participants as well as general visitors took keen interest in the workshop and came forward to learn one of the languishing art.



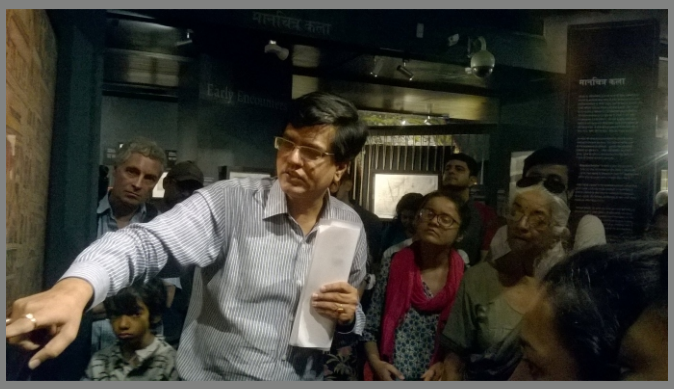
# Programmes



## Curator Walks

Three Curator walks were organised around the temporary exhibition *Cadence and Counterpoint: Documenting Santal Musical Tradition.* On 3rd May 2015 the walk was conducted by Mr. Mushtak Khan, on 10th May 2015 another walk was led by Dr. Ruchira Ghose, Mushtak Khan, Krittika Narula and Deepak Das in the exhibition. The third walk on 17th May 2015 had all the entire curatorial team accompanied by the designer of the exhibition Mr. Kanu Kartik Agrawal. The visitors got an opportunity to interact with curators and explore the objects which was an enriching experience for them.

Three curator walks were organised around the exhibition *Art of Calligraphy* on 23 May, 12 June, and 11 July 2015 which were led by Dr. Anamika Pathak, Dr. Naseem Akhtar, and Zahid Ali Ansari respectively.



A number of guided walks were also held around Cosmology to Cartography exhibition led by Prshant Lahoti, Director, Kalakriti Archives. All the maps displayed belonged to his collection.

## Special Talks

On 13th May 2015 two special lectures were organised around the exhibition by Dr. Jayasri Banerjee and other by Dr. Madhu Khanna. The former lecture focused on the musical traditions of the Santal while the latter was based on the feminine in Santal.

# Programmes



## Art History and Archaeology Talks

As a part of Art and Archaeology Talk Series, organised by National Museum in collaboration with National Museum Institute, lecture titled "*The Ajivikas of Ancient India: A Discovery of their Religious Centre and Art*" was delivered by Prof. (Dr.) Piotr Balcerowicz at Conference Room on 17th June 2015.

## National Museum Lectures

In the Lecture series, 18th Lecture was conducted on the 27 June 2015, at National Museum auditorium. The speakers were Smt. Sushma Bahl, a well known Art Historian, and Smt. Helen Acharya, Secretary of Sangeet Natak Akademi. They delivered the lecture on the topic *Revisiting Yoga Chakra: Tradition & Modernity- a Multimedia Creative Encounter*. This lecture was part of the series of events as part of Yoga day celebrations.

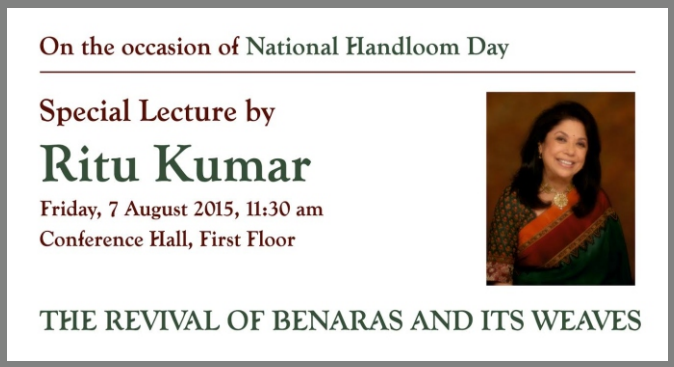
On 12 August 2015, a special lecture cum gallery walk was given by Dr. Vivek Nanda and Dr. Alexander Johnson on the theme *A Cultural Journey of Indian Maps*. It was the 19th lecture of the special lecture series at the National Museum. The curators of the exhibition *Cosmology to Cartography* after giving brief orientation in the auditorium, took the participants to see the collection inside the Exhibition gallery itself. The displayed 72 maps were described emphasizing on the highlights of the collection.

## International Yoga Day

International Yoga Day was celebrated at National Museum on 21st June 2015 with a series of events. The program initiated with Yoga session for the staff inside the museum lawn, thereafter a guided tour for children and families on the theme "*Depiction of Yoga in Indian Art*" was conducted. There was a Film show screening called "*Yoga- The Path of my Ancestors*" directed by Dr. Deepika Kothari & produced by Vishuddhi Films played in the National Museum auditorium on this occasion.

## National Handloom Day

On the occasion of National Handloom Day, 7th August 2015, a special lecture was organised, delivered by Ms. Ritu Kumar, on *The Revival of Benaras and its Weaves*. The lecture was attended by various scholars of textile industry and staff of museum.



# Programmes



## International Conference for Inclusive Museums

National Museum hosted the International Conference for Inclusive Museums organised by National Council of Science Museums. The conference delegates included leaders in the field as well as emerging artists and scholars, who represent a broad range of disciplines and perspectives. A variety of presentation options and session types offered delegates multiple opportunities to engage, to discuss key issues in the field, and to build relationships with scholars from other cultures and disciplines.

## Activity on Social Media

National Museum has active Facebook and Twitter profiles. Invites and photographs of varied events that the Museum hosts are shared regularly. Besides invites, exclusive posts are curated and posted regularly on both mediums. These mostly share the collection of the museum, exhibition details, online exhibits, and news articles covering the museum.

Exclusive hashtags, pertaining to various collections and exhibitions have been created and are used regularly to increase awareness about National Museum collections and activities. Through these accounts a healthy interaction is maintained with the followers, and often queries are addressed.

This quarter on Facebook, 910 people have liked the National Museum page, and 17,494 impressions were made. On an average there were 28 visits per day to the page.

On Twitter 547 people followed the official account and 2,59,200 impressions were made. On average there was 1.8 % engagements and 778 Retweets over the period.

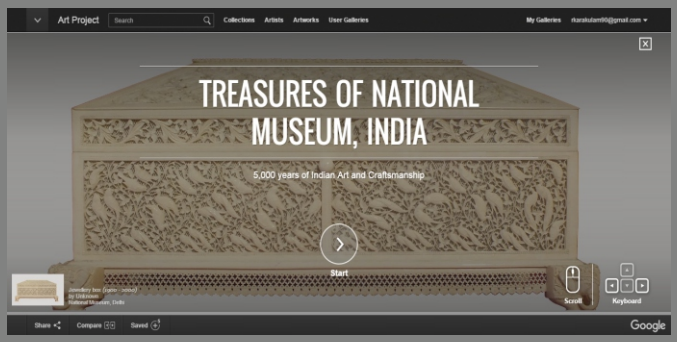
## Virtual Exhibitions

Around 13 virtual exhibitions are available online showing highlights of various galleries of National Museum. The themes are myriad and the objects are not specific to a single gallery or collection. Staring from the artefacts of Harappa, one can get a glimpse of tribal and folk lore objects, along with various tangible and intangible heritage elements. The story of Ramayana, the craftsmanship of decorative arts in Ivory or wood, the splendors of Indian jewellery, and the unique defense armors etc. are online available for website viewers. Also an initiative of Google art, a virtual exhibition on Pottery from Ancient Peru is on website. The launch of Google Art project has added many dimensions to the show of collections of the Museum. It is reaching a larger population and has created a niche in the virtual world.

## New Batch of Yuva Saathi

New Batch of Yuva Saathi was also selected for training in the month of August. This will be the 6th Batch of Yuva saathi program. The programme aims at engaging young minds in a dialogue with the exhibits of National Museum.

# New Initiatives




## Google Art Project

National Museum launched 5 new exhibits on Google Art Project. The exhibitions are Nauras- The Many Arts of the Deccan, Alamkara- The Beauty of Ornament, Pottery from Ancient Peru , Treasures of National Museum, Indian and Pilgrimage on a Necklace- Pendants with Puranic Imagery..

## New Merchandize

The Museum has introduced a range of new products at its shop featuring collections from the Museum on the ground floor including replicas, T-shirts, notebooks, magnets and pocket mirrors. The new merchandize is attracting a lot of attention and are excellent memorabilia and gifting items for visitors.

# New Initiatives



## Upcoming

National Museum is soon to launch an Audio visual Bilingual film that will be a peek into the collections of the museum, and will be available to everyone.
The entry ticket charge of museum has been revised and photography charges are also standardized for a more organized approach towards requests of publication of museum collection.

## PWD Project

National Museum continuously works towards improving its facilities offered to its wide visitor base – children, tourists and cultural enthusiasts. The overall objective is to make the Museum inclusive for all.

A percentage of the Museum's visitor base comprises of people with disabilities. In the past one year the Museum has succeeded in increasing its visibility among this section of society by collaborating with organizations working for people with disabilities and developing programmes which are specially designed for visually impaired visitors and for other audiences with disabilities.

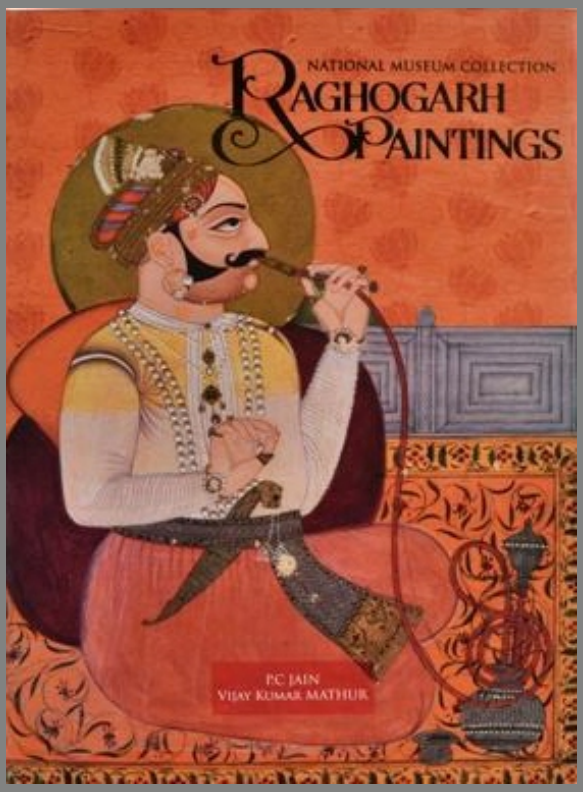
Programmes like storytelling sessions for visually impaired audiences, tactile exhibition displays, one day workshops/seminars, and touch tour of select museum objects for museum walk-ins are few tailor-made programmes which were developed and implemented in 2014.

National Museum is now planning to open a new gallery with enhanced access for people with disabilities and provide differently-abled visitors an equally enriching experience as other members of audiences. This will be further enriched by training and sensitization for staff and volunteers. This project has been conceptualized with key partners, namely UNESCO, SAKSHAM, Open Knowledge Community (OKC) and National Platform for the Rights of Disabled (NPRD). The gallery is scheduled to open for public on 18th December 2015.

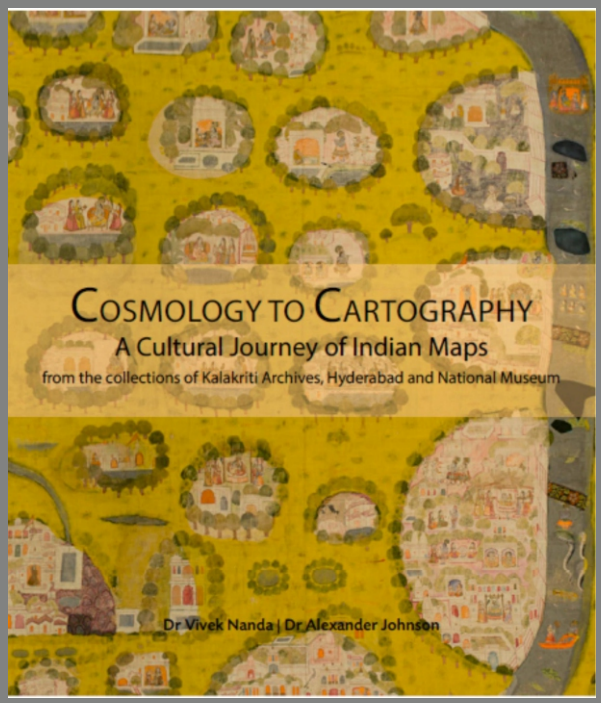
Volunteers from Saksham check the objects for PWD Project

# Publications

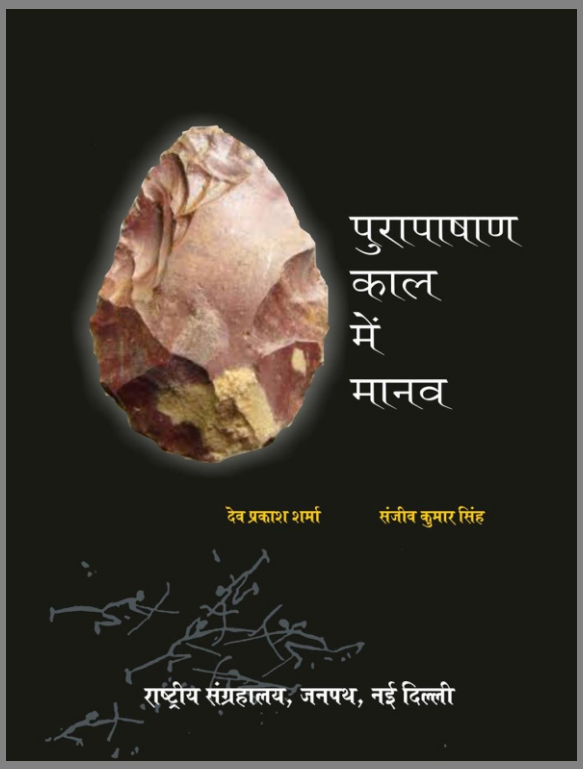
NATIONAL MUSEUM New Delhi




Price: Rs. 450/-




Price: Rs. 495/-




Price: Rs. 50/-

# Special Exhibition

NATIONAL MUSEUM New Delhi

Special Exhibition titled 'Imaging the Isle Across: Vintage Photography from Ceylon
26 September 2015 to 10 November 2015

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